

was handsome, but he was petulant, overbearing, fickle, and vicious, and her impulsive union with him was the beginning of many tragedies. In marrying for love, she indeed persuaded herself that her passion was in accordance with sound policy. Her chosen husband was, next to herself, in the line of the English succession, and the marriage w^rould₃ she conceived, in spite of Elizabeth's displeasure, only strengthen her own claim. Her calculations both as to her own personal happiness and her ultimate chance of filling Elizabeth's place were destined to prove tragic illusions. Meanwhile, however, she married Darnley, proclaimed him king, and was happy.

The marriage and the proclamation together brought the antagonism of the Protestants to a head. Darnley was a Catholic, though he once condescended to hear Knox preach in St Giles', and in her union with a Catholic husband they naturally enough saw a new menace to their creed. In the proclamation they resented an infringement of the constitutional rights of the Estates. Even to Moray, who had himself gone the length of trying to frighten Elizabeth with the "bogle" of a Catholic husband for Mary, the policy of compromise now appeared unworkable, and, after vainly endeavouring to dissuade her from her purpose, he joined the militant opposition. The General Assembly petitioned for the suppression of popery in the palace as well as throughout the realm, and the definite ratification of the Protestant religion. In reply Mary claimed liberty of conscience for herself, disclaimed any intention of coercing the Protestant conscience, and offered to consent to whatever Parliament might resolve on the question of religion. This sounds exceedingly reasonable, and the profession of regard for conscientious scruples was altogether admirable. But the Protestants did not feel safe without the absolute guarantees which she had hitherto evaded ; and if they had been able to pry into her secret correspondence with the pope and the kings of France and Spain, they would have found concrete grounds for their alarm and their suspicion of double dealing. Her profession of tolerant principles was alien both to the creed she professed and the policy of a Catholic restoration which we know that she secretly cherished. She was certainly politic enough to weigh the chances even as to religion when